

The first White House Conference on Aging in 1961 produced a Senior Citizens Charter of Rights and Obligations. The second White House Conference on Aging, held in 1971, broadened that recognition and deepened our commitment to providing opportunities to our older citizens for maintenance of income and health and for self-realization and continuing usefulness. It is appropriate to update the Charter in the light of growing knowledge and recognition of the needs and abilities of our older citizens. People of all ages should join in the development of a Declaration of Rights and Obligations of Older Persons so that it can be proclaimed as part of our Bicentennial celebration.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the month of May 1975 as Older Americans Month. I urge everyone to participate in the efforts to achieve the goal of proclaiming a new Declaration of Rights and Obligations for Older Persons, which can become a rallying point for our Nation during the Bicentennial year of 1976 and a guide to action during the years ahead.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD

Proclamation 4372

•

May 7, 1975

National Arthritis Month, 1975

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Arthritis, the oldest known chronic disease, is still the Nation's greatest crippler. This disease and related rheumatic disorders afflict more than 20 million people in the United States, at an annual cost of about \$4 billion, and are exceeded only by heart disease as the most common chronic illness in the country today.

Recognition of this major public health problem and determination to combat it effectively have been demonstrated through the passage of the National Arthritis Act of 1974 by the United States Congress, which

42 USC 289c-1
note.

I was pleased to sign earlier this year. As this legislation makes plain, the total cost of arthritis must be counted not only in terms of dollars, but of human suffering and disability. Uncontrolled arthritis significantly decreases the quality of American life and has a negative economic, social, and psychological impact on the families of those afflicted.

We have learned a great deal through governmentally and privately supported research. Yet this disorder is not fully understood and it is not adequately controllable. We must meet the critical need for new research ideas and studies upon which advances in the area of arthritis treatment and prevention can be based. Our goal continues to be the eventual elimination of arthritis as a cause of human suffering and dire expense to our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of May, 1975, as National Arthritis Month. I urge the people of the United States and educational, philanthropic, scientific, medical and health care organizations and professionals to advance the programs of our national effort to discover the cause and cures of arthritis and other rheumatic diseases and to alleviate the suffering of victims of these disorders.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD

Proclamation 4373

May 7, 1975

**Fixing Terminal Date Respecting Service in the Armed Forces Entitling
Persons to Certain Veterans Benefits**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Congress has provided that entitlement to certain veterans benefits be limited to persons serving in the Armed Forces during the period, beginning August 5, 1964, referred to as the Vietnam era. The President is authorized to determine the last day on which a person must have